

Regarding need to universalize the HPV Vaccine to fight cervical cancer effectively in the country-Laid

SHRI PRADYUT BORDOLOI (NAGAON): Last year, the Finance Minister in her interim budget speech, spoke of fighting cervical cancer by encouraging the HPV vaccine amongst girls. However, the Government still hasn't included it in the universal immunisation programme. Cervical cancer is the second most common cancer amongst women in India, with the Northeast suffering heavily. Only 1.2% of Indian women have been screened for cervical cancer according to NFHS-5, with 6 Northeastern states recording far below average screening levels. Many sites from the National Cancer Registry with the highest incidence rates like Arunachal's Papumpare district are in the Northeast. A Lancet study of 11 registries showed that survival rates after 5 years in the region are amongst the lowest in the country - low as 31% in Tripura, reflecting late detection and treatment due to inadequate awareness and facilities. I thus urge the Government to universalise the HPV vaccine - the Northeast will benefit immensely.